

# **HISTORY of Colerain, North Carolina**

*by*

*Ruth F. White*



**COLERAIN BEACH**

**July, 1970**







# INTRODUCTION

The information for this History was secured from articles written by Dr. Archibald Henderson, Mr. Fred A. Olds and from Histories written by Mr. A.J.M. Perry and Mrs. Manley H. White. Dates and information were secured from History of the Colonies, in the Edenton Library, Register of Deeds office in Windsor, N.C. and Department of Archives and History in Raleigh.

I am not a historian or a writer. I am not an authority on Colonial or local history. I wish I were. I am thankful we do not have to be either to possess a keen interest and deep appreciation of our noble heritage. I do feel it is our duty to have a loyalty to this our Homeland and gratitude to past generations which have brought us to this progressive era. Surely a study of the past will help us appreciate the present and inspire us to build, achieve and enjoy the great future that is waiting for us.

In the beginning may I apologize for all the dates, names, events and important things I have left out. Also for all the errors. As you detect them, do not be offended. Just sit down and correct them. "I stand to be corrected". I believe area Histories are badly needed. More and more individuals are beginning to lose touch with their past. We cannot search for a meaningful present if we are ignorant of our past.

The following is just a sketch of some of the things I have learned about this God-loving, peaceful community since I came here to teach 56 years ago. We do not feel those brave settlers had an easy road to travel or have those who have followed. We know they must have had that power of mind which bears up under all difficulties.

## HISTORY OF COLERAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

Nowhere in North Carolina has nature been kinder than to the region that borders the Chowan River. Its beauty is an eternal one. The civilization it once cradled has now passed away, but its charm and loveliness survive. "The house remains beautiful after the guests are gone."

The first people attracted to this region were the Indians. Even today, relics and tools used by them are occasionally unearthed. We know that the Chowan River and the area through which it flows was explored by colonists from Sir Walter Raleigh's settlements at Roanoke Island, as early as 1585. This is substantiated by a very crude map of that date which shows that a survey had been made of both the Chowan and Roanoke Rivers. Dr. W.P. Cummings, of Davidson College, an authority on the topography and early maps of the Southeastern United States, believes that this sketchy map of 1585 was made for the use of John White, the leader of the ill-fated Lost Colony.

Historians tell us that probably the first permanent white settler in North Carolina was a certain Captain Nathaniel Batts whose house is designated on the Cumberland Map of 1685, as being located near the mouth of the Chowan River in what is now our county of Bertie.

With the gradual migration of other settlers, overflowing from the Virginia Colony into the rich and fertile Albemarle region of North Carolina, the lands on the rivers and waterways were the first to be taken up. This was only natural as the earliest means of transportation and travel were on these river highways, such



as the Chowan. Many of these river holdings were acquired during the waning years of the seventeenth century. Most of these were originally grants from the Lords Proprietor.

The eighteenth century saw the beginning of the development of these river properties into plantations, some of them increasing in size as their owners became more prosperous. Plantation houses became more pretentious and were sometimes built of brick. The homes of the river planters were usually well furnished. Records of old wills and sales speak of walnut, pine and mahogany furniture, with china and silver imported from England.

Because of the scarcity of inns and taverns, plantation owners considered it a social duty to extend hospitality to all travelers. Most of the news of the outside world was learned from these people, who came overland or on the boats which plied up and down the Chowan River. By the time of the American Revolution, a number of these river homes already had considerable history behind them, and though they might have changed ownership several times, they had become well known in the area.

In 1743, John Campbell a Captain in the British navy purchased 800 acres of land on the west side of the Chowan River near Webb's Ferry. This ferry operated across the Chowan River to Bandon in Chowan County. The settlement grew, and Campbell named it Colerain after his hometown in Ireland. His beautiful estate he named Lazy Hill. Campbell had two sons, James and John.

When an epidemic of fever broke out all along the river settlements, many of the people died. Others discouraged, moved away or farther inland. John Campbell moved to Halifax County near Weldon. When his estate was sold it was listed as follows: "One tract of land known as 'Lazy Hill' lying in Bertie County on the west side of Chowan River, containing 800 acres. It is a beautiful situation well-watered, on its premises are a good dwelling house, kitchen, store, warehouse, workhouse, barns, milk and meat house, stables. Together with a good shad and herring fishery, a good apple and peach orchard and two vegetable gardens": This description might be used for most of the river plantations.

Campbell worshiped at St. Paul's Church in Edenton. It is said he was a loyal patriot, devoted heart and soul to the American cause. Sanders rates him in ability to Joseph Hewes. He was known as the leading merchant of the province. He served and represented Bertie County in the General Assembly in 1744, 1745, also 1754 to 1760 - again served from 1769 to 1775. He served in four provincial Congresses at New Bern in 1744 and 1745; Hillsboro in 1775 and Halifax in 1776.

A large part of the Campbell property was sold to the Holleys. Josiah Holley once owned all of what is now Colerain. The first Post Office in Bertie County was at Colerain and Josiah Holley was the first Postmaster in 1818. His sister, Mary Holley, married William Etheridge a sea captain from Roanoke Island. When Mr. Holley died, he left their son Edward Etheridge his Colerain property. This included the beautiful old home now owned by the Saunders Brothers. The old Holley and Etheridge Cemetery is by the side of the house and is visible from the highway.

The records show that in 1774, Humphery Hardy, a sea captain, bought 600 acres of land from Campbell. Records tell us the Hardy Family came to Bertie County about 1690. General Douglas MacArthur was a descendant of this family, through his mother, Mary Pinckney Hardy. Hardy was a Sea Captain who established a trading post at Colerain for the barter of turpentine, tar, pitch, staves, barrels and other commodities for the exchange of West Indies products. This successful business had much to do with the starting of the present town of Colerain where it now stands one mile from the River.



Lewis T. Smallwood, who had acquired the Ella E. Hardy tract, sold it in 1900 to Lewis Lipsitz. Mrs. Frank White purchased the tract from Mr. Lipsitz in 1910. The heirs of Mr. Frank White now own the plantation and a daughter, Mrs. Perry, lives in the old home. Two beach resorts, Perry's and White's Beaches are located on this estate.

It is believed the farms bordering on the Chowan River from the Hardy home place to the Holley and Etheridge Estate were originally part of the John Campbell Estate.

White population of the Colonies was divided in three classes. The Gentry - composed of the planters, or large land owners, public officials, wealthy merchants, ministers, lawyers, doctors, and other professional men.

In the lovely homes of the Gentry History suggests courtly manners, stiff brocades, powdered wigs, long dresses with hoops and bustles; long coats made of broadcloth in bright colors, tight knee fitting trousers made of velvet, silk stockings and slippers with large ornamental buckles. Children wore minature clothes like those of the grownups.

The planter lived at home and lived well. His table was always filled with an abundance of pork, beef, sheep and other meats produced on the plantation along with vegetables, fruits, fish and game. A trusted servant or slave would often be given the duty to supply the food.

It is said every Plantation had one Negro who was greatly loved and respected because of his understanding of all creatures, wild or tame. He could tame the wildest bull or horse. Those who watched would say "He ain't afraid of them." Every wounded animal could tell he was their friend. They seemed to possess a certain type of magic that no one else could acquire. He often spoke of the winds, clouds, sunshine, rain, and always associated them with God. Such faith was envied in those days and would be now, could it be found. Often such a person would be remembered in the Master's will.

Children of plantation owners were never lonely. There was so much to learn. City children hear of birth and death as strange rumors but on the farms they had special tasks such as to care for expectant mothers among the cows, goats, hogs and dogs. They often had close calls with savage bulls, goats and rattlesnakes. But among their pets were tamed deer, raccoons, squirrels, rabbits and mocking birds. Often riding bare back to the store meant riding where they could study nature. They also knew the birds, beast, flowers and trees. Negroes were their constant companions and friends.

The tillers of the soil were in the second class. They cleared the forest and produced the necessities. Their homes were small and their furniture was made at home.

The third class was composed of several classes of free workers, voluntary workers who bound themselves for a passage from England to the New World, and involuntary workers. This group included felons, paupers and political prisoners of England sentenced to terms of service in the Colonies by the British Courts in lieu of more severe punishment in England. Freedom dues often consisted of acres of land, wearing apparel and tools.

## *RIVER TRAFFIC*

River trade along the Chowan developed in proportion to the development of the plantations along its banks. Every plantation had a landing and it was not un-

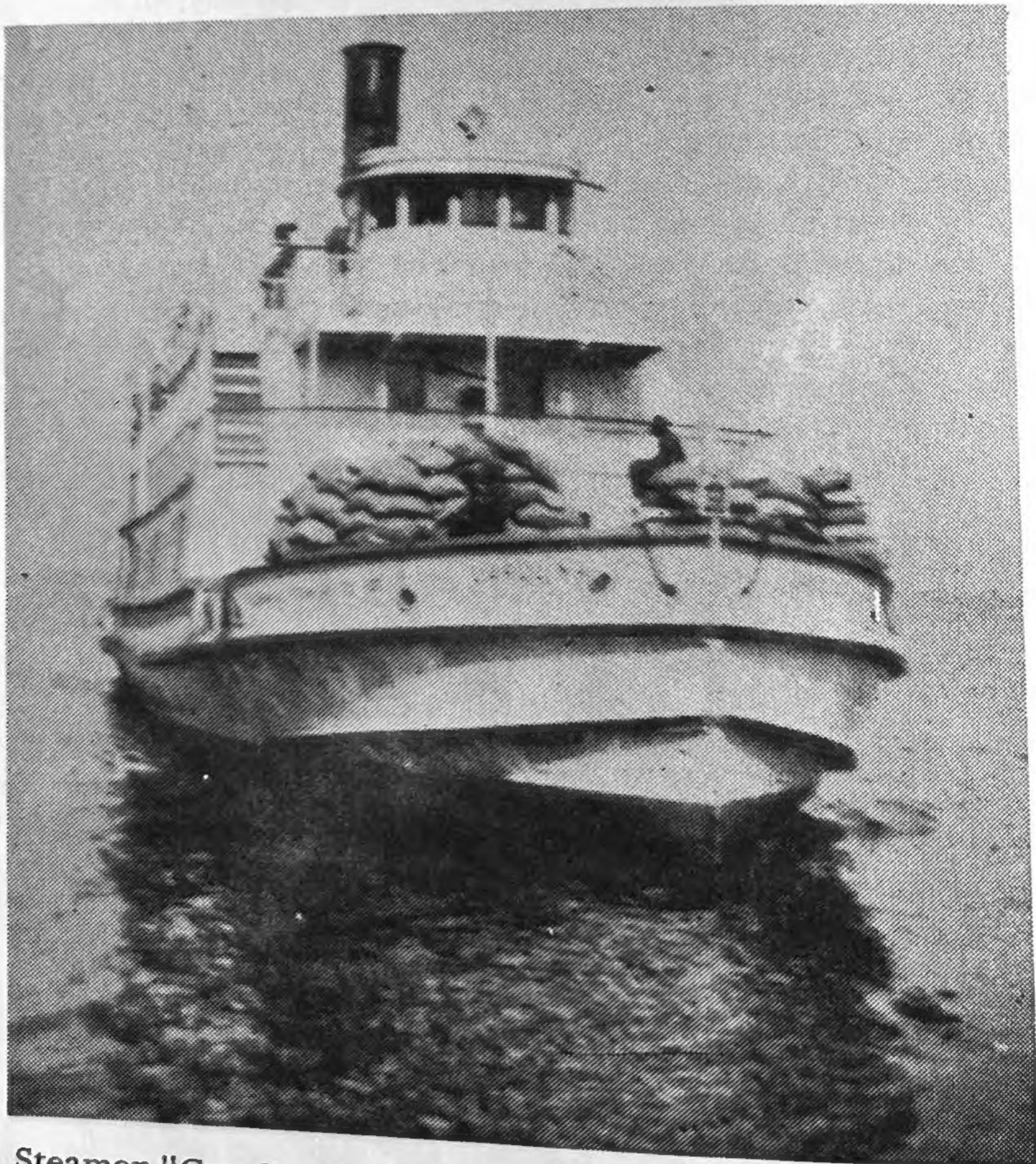


common for vessels seeking cargo to come up the Chowan River to the plantation landings to purchase what the owners desired to sell. At the same time these vessels would bring the plantation owners their purchases, shipped through Norfolk, Baltimore and other eastern seaports. Through the years freight and passenger boats were seen daily at the docks. This trade flourished through the nineteenth century, and into the first part of the twentieth. Tragedy sometimes struck the river traffic. One of the worst in February, 1903. This was the sinking of the "Steamboat Olive." A sudden whirl wind appeared on the river. Captain Whitley of the "Olive" attempted to bring the boat to shore, but it sank before he could do so. Seventeen passengers drowned. Other well-known river steamers were the "Carolina", the "Guide" and the "Virginia".

There was some commercial traffic on the Chowan as late as 1919. The writer recalls traveling that year by steamboat from Edenton to Colerain, arriving on the Bertie shore in the morning at sunrise.

Around 1920, a ferry making four trips a day ran from Colerain to the Chowan side of the river.

Commercial river traffic has declined to an occasional barge loaded with pulp wood or oil. In the spring, the commercial fishing boats are out. With the arrival of warm weather, the Chowan is busy with the small craft of the many summer people who have built along its beautiful shore.



Steamer "Carolina" on Chowan River. It ran from Edenton to Tunis making daily trips - meeting trains at Tunis and Edenton.

1912 - 1918



ment of Agriculture. It authorized the establishment of the Land Grant Colleges in the various states, and cooperating counties to employ full-time county agents to assist farm people in better living through the adoption of improved farm and home practices.

Various counties put on part-time farm agents to work with farmers using these recommended practices. According to records in the office of the Bertie County Register of Deeds, former Sheriff J.B. Stokes and Herbert Jenkins, Sr. had served on a part-time basis prior to World War I.

The one mule carts that were a common sight are now rarely seen. Even the mules have almost disappeared, having been replaced with tractors and trucks.

One of the greatest changes made during this period has been the extending of cheap electricity to practically all farms. Formerly, only a few farmers had electricity and they were supplied by individual Delco plants and were expensive to operate.

There has been a great improvement in roads. In 1924, there was not a hard surfaced road in Bertie County.

Because of the boll weevil, cotton has ceased to be a very important crop.

Since corn is no longer selected from the bin, and cross hybrids are used along with ample plant food, the average yield has increased from 25 to 40 bushels per acre to around 125 bushels. The hilling methods have changed from a one horse turn plow to a two to six tractor plowing.

Research and study have increased peanut yield from 900 to 1200 lbs. per acre to 3000 or more. Self-feeders and good breeders have made hog raising an extra income for the farmer. Good rich pastures have made the raising of beef cattle an asset.

Human and mule labor have been greatly reduced. Instead of one man and one mule with several trips required for preparing and planting a crop, some of the farmers now prepare, fertilize and plant four to six rows at a time. Almost every farmer uses two row equipment.

Colerain's land owning class has never been pushed off the land. Their roots are sunk deep in this rewarding rich soil. Through the years they have taken their stand, living expansively during prosperity, tightening their belts in depression, but staying at home to await better days.

## *FISHING*

It is believed there has been a fishery at Colerain since Campbell started his.

Listed among the names of owners and operators of fisheries at Colerain have been Holleys, Etheridges, Deans, Beasleys, Wilsons, Mizelles, Perrys, Nixons, and Wynns.

Through the years most of the fishermen have lived on the Chowan County side of the river. Such names as Nixon, Tynch, Bass, Bunch, Harrell, Peele, Lane, Belch and others have for generations been successful fishermen and marketed most of their fish at Colerain.

The herring is a fish of passage and enters the river every spring through the sounds from the ocean. It is hard to understand how such multitudes could enter through the narrow and shallow inlets. Naturalists say that fish of passage if not obstructed seek every spring to return to their native waters. Thus it is important we have our fish laws for conservation. It is interesting to note



# CHURCHES

Organized religion made little headway in the Colonies until after the Revolutionary War. Early Bertie was part of the Chowan Precinct and was under St. Paul's Parish, Edenton.

It is said a "Miss Annie Moore of Cashi neighborhood was converted to Baptist faith and deserving baptism according to the faith went to South Carolina to be baptized." There she met Elder Jeremiah Doargan and married him. They moved to Bertie County and he says he planted churches at Cashi in 1770 and Colerain in 1780. The Colerain Baptist Church was first known as Wiccacon. It was located four miles from Colerain near the farm now owned by Roy Simons. In 1829, the Colerain Baptist Church was located on the site of the present Negro Church now known as "Second Baptist". Zion Hill is the second Negro Baptist Church in Colerain.

In 1834, Joseph Etheridge and Jack Ellyson sold 2 1/4 acres of land for \$22.50 to the following deacons of the Colerain Baptist Church: Solomon White, Samuel Evans, Joseph Smith, and John Wilson. The church is now located on this site.

In the year 1871, a lot in Colerain was donated by Mr. John Hays for the purpose of building a Methodist Church. The deed was given and one dollar paid by the trustees to make it legal. The names appearing on the deed are: Mr. J.B. Parker, Mr. John Leary, Mr. Joe Leary, Mr. Simons and Mr. T.D. Holley. A building was erected on the lot and this building was used until 1939, when it was burned. This lot is where the Methodist Church now stands, a brick building dedicated April 8, 1945. Bishop W.W. Peele of Richmond, Virginia, had charge of the service.

## DELK LODGE 171

Colerain Masonic Lodge was granted a Charter, December 5, 1855, and named Delk Lodge 171. The Master was Rev. James Delk for whom it was named. He was preaching in Harréllsville at the time and was sixty-five years old. This Lodge had twenty-four members which was quite a large membership for that time. Colonel Etherton Wilson was Senior Warden. These members were: David O. Askew, Joseph Smith, Aaron O. Askew, Dr. A.J. Askew, James C. Freeman, James S. Perry, Alfred Winborne, David McGlaughan, John W. Nowell, Horatio Hayes, James W. Etheridge, Zack Smith, Josiah H. Davidson, Willie D. Hays, Thomas Eggleston, Lemuel Evans, Rev. B.B. Williams, Henry Ward, Kinchen Pruden, Jordan Hill.

This Lodge has no record from 1883 to 1910. When it was reopened, they bought the land where the new Colerain Lodge Hall now stands. It was dedicated in 1960.

## FARMING

It has been said many times that nothing is so certain as taxes and death. To this should be added change. During our lifetime we have seen many evidences of change. This has been true in farming as in other activities. Agricultural extension became a law of the nation when in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Smith-Lever law providing for the U.S. Department



## EDUCATION

School was first taught in the homes by tutors. Then small private one teacher schools were opened in each neighborhood. In the late eighteen hundreds Colerain Academy, a private graded school was built and managed by twelve local trustees. They were responsible for hiring and paying the teachers. In 1907, the Academy became a public school and was enlarged. Mr. Ira E.D. Andrews was the first Principal. Nearby students walked three and four miles to school, while some boarded in town and others drove their horse and buggy bringing not only food for their lunch but fodder for their horse.

A new brick high school building was erected in 1923 in Colerain and the old building became a teacherage. This burned in 1927, leaving the teachers with just what they had on. All their belongings were destroyed.

A large Negro school was built about this time and then enlarged in 1933. In 1963, two high schools were opened in the county. At the present time one is used as a Junior High and one as Bertie Senior High. Complete consolidation and integration by busing is now being practiced.

There are two private schools in the county, the Roanoke Chowan Academy at Windsor and Bertie Academy at Merry Hill. A number of students from the Colerain area attend these schools.



Ira E.D. Andrews, first principal of Bertie Academy as a public school, opened in 1907.



that as early as 1771, a bill was passed by the English House of Commons to prohibit fishing in the American Colonies after June 25. Thanks to their foresight and our fishing laws, the fishing industry continues strong today.

Through the years there have been three ways of catching fish by net in the Chowan River. The method used by the earliest settlers was by seines. These vary from 2200 to 2700 yards in length and are usually 18 feet deep as fished. The hauling ropes from end to end to reach the shore must be more than 2 1/2 miles long. The seine is carried out by two large boats, each managed by twelve men. The net is laid out beginning with the middle of the net straight and nearly parallel with the shore. The boats go in opposite directions the desired distance, each with one end of the seine and then row to the shore, letting the rope to which the net is attached run out from the boats. The shore ends of the ropes are attached to large capstans, each turned by six horses (later by motor). The seine is then pulled to the shore and great hordes of fish landed. History says in 1890, one million herring were landed on one haul at a fishery at Bandon Beach in Chowan County owned by Thomas Holley. He was the nephew of Augustus Holley who once owned the land that is now Colerain. Perhaps the best known seine fishing was done at Capehart's Fishery at Avoca. This was a thriving business for many years.

Another method is by gill nets. The name itself suggests the method of capturing the fish. The nets are stretched out in a straight line and fish are caught by their gills. This method is fast disappearing as it is known to hang the largest female fish, often ready to spawn, which then lose their spawn in their struggles even though they may escape. It is said gill nets often destroy the best breeders.

The last and most widely known is the pound or Dutch net. The word pound here suggests ways the fish are caught for it is in a pound or trap that fish are led to ensnare themselves. Rows of stakes are driven from the shore out into the river. Sometime these rows extend a thousand feet or more from the shore. To these stakes, nets with large mesh are attached. The fish like to stay around these nets. This net is called a lead net as it leads into a pound about 35 feet square. Here the mesh of the net is smaller and still following the net the fish are led into a funnel shaped net or trap. There the fish remain until the coming of the boats, when the trap is dropped and the fishermen pull up the net and dip the fish into the boat.

The largest fresh water fishery in the world is now located in Colerain. This fishery began to operate in 1927, under the name of Perry-Belch Fish Company. It was owned by Linnie D. Perry, Lonnie A. Perry and Arlie T. Belch. Mr. Belch conceived the idea and designed the mechanical part of the plant. After a few years, Lonnie A. Perry sold his interest to his partners. In 1945, Arlie T. Belch died. His son, Arlie T. Belch, Jr., and Linnie D. Perry continued to operate the plant until 1953, when the Belch heirs sold their interest to Linnie D. Perry and Leo Wynns. Since then it has been known as the Perry-Wynns Fish Company.

In the early days the herring and shad were sold to farmers in and around the Roanoke and Chowan section. They purchased them directly on the beaches and hauled them away by horse and cart-loads. Cured herring was one of the main items on the farm menu along with corn bread, sweet potatoes and bacon. Herrings were cheap and some families ate them three times a day. Boyce writing of conditions in 1880 in his "Economic and Social History of Chowan County" said along the Chowan River a dollar a month would procure for a person the usual diet of much of the population. This source of cheap food, and the mild climate, meant that a person could exist with very little work.



# *JAMES ADAMS FLOATING THEATER*

In 1913, the James E. Adams Floating Theater was built in Washington, N.C. It was the first of the showboats to have a successful life on the Atlantic coast. For years the Floating Theater was an annual visitor to Colerain.

She was a big, lumbering sort of boat when she finally was all boarded up. She was more like a floating barn than a ship when she was towed down the Pamlico from Washington on her maiden voyage in 1914. But there was nothing about her that suggested the farmyard to the eager customers who gathered to see the performance in the theater on the upper deck. As darkness fell they would cross the gangplank into a floating palace inhabited by lovely damsels, strong men, evil uncles, and scheming women.

Weeks before the arrival there would be an air of excitement. Young ladies would be making purchases for a new dress or ribbons and laces for an old one. They must be ready for that first evening. The men would be counting out their money and shaking their best suits. They must be ready, too.

The favorite, Beulah Adams, daughter of the boat's owner and known as "The Mary Pickford of the Chesapeake," played the heroine often in danger of expiring at the hands of the cruel villain. Her husband, Charlie Hunter, was the dashing hero, who rescued her in the nick of time, all the while beset by the wiles of some scheming vixen.

"The Serpent and the Dove," "East Lynne," "St. Elmo," "The Parson's Bride," "The Curse of an Aching Heart," "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," "Daddy Long-legs," and "Smiling Through," were some of the plays which made hearts beat faster, brought a lump to the throat and a tear to the eye.

"Ten Nights in a Bar Room" was another well-loved "melledrama" which the Floating Theater was careful to advertise as having had the offensive "element of burlesque" removed from the show.

Each night the program was changed so that if a patron managed to go every night of the six-day stand, the management proudly boasted that "he would never hear the same joke twice."

Behind the magic of the footlights and the gay music of the band which gave a concert after each performance, was the hard work involved in maintaining the showboat.

Members of the cast doffed their costumes to scrub decks and tidy up the theater. The "Cap'n" left his box office to handle the tug and navigate the rivers. The handsome lead would also manage the props, the villain could be in charge of the costumes, and the heroine might paint scenery in her off hours.

Jimmy McCallum, of Maxton, N.C., was a member of the orchestra. He married Fanny Bryant of Colerain and lived here until his death.

The boat itself took many a knock of fortune. Once in the Roanoke River she ran into a large underwater obstruction, and the hole poked in her undersides allowed enough water in so that she went to the bottom.

Members of the cast crawled up to the upper deck where they were above water and lived there until the boat was towed to port for repairs.

In spite of the sinkings and the fires, the dangers in storm and gale and a stint during World War I as a recreation center for soldiers and sailors, the theater held together while cast and crew lived through good as well as bad times. Often making ends meet on payday was a close squeeze, and the repertoire had to be changed to meet changing times.

At last the handwriting was on the wall. The movies and highways were robbing the showboat of her patrons. High amusement taxes, too, contributed



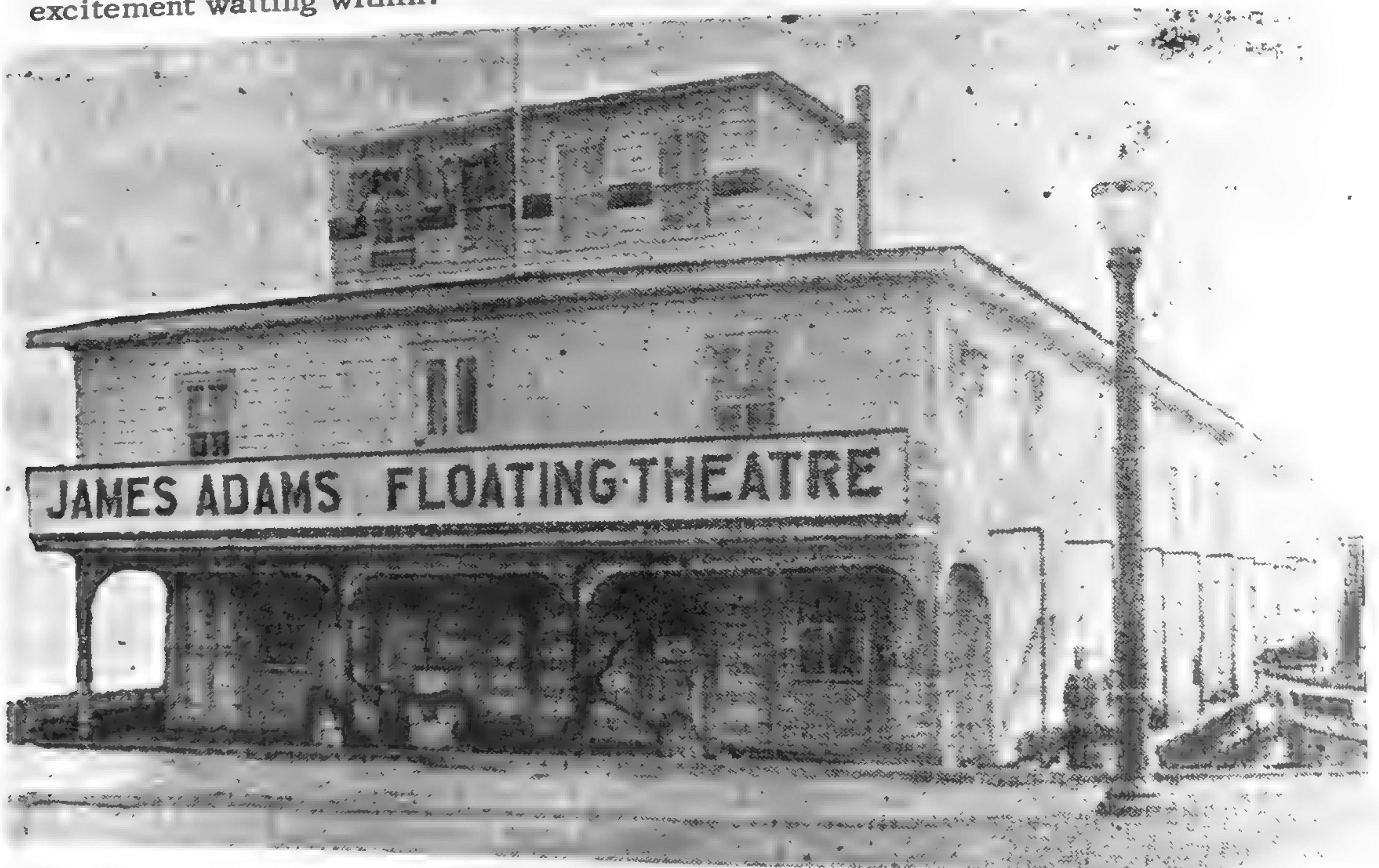
to the downfall of river entertainment.

The wharves of the little towns were rotting. In its heyday, the Floating Theater would spend six days in Manteo, then go to Colerain for a week. A week in Williamston and a week in Columbia were followed by three days at Belhaven, three at Oriental, and then on to Beaufort and South Carolina and Georgia. But the docks were becoming neglected, the area around them in many cases deserted. By 1940, the showboat decided to give up.

If you cross the Bay Bridge to Annapolis, Md., today, look to the south and there you will see, on the banks of the West River, the old Floating Theater. She was beached there in 1940 and is still in business as a restaurant and some-time theater.

She is securely moored at a pier quite close to the highway where thousands of cars stream past each day. At night the beams from the headlights dim the glow from inside the old boat.

It is a far cry from the old days when the whole county turned out to see her rounding the bend, lights pouring out over the dark water, band sending sweet music into the night air, and a whole world of romance, adventure, and excitement waiting within.



This picture will revive memories in Colerain, where the famous old showboat, The "James Adams," used to tie up for performances.

## BASEBALL

Baseball has always been an integral part of the Colerain community. With the formation of the strong semi-pro Albemarle League in 1947, baseball attained its greatest popularity and acclaim.

During the 1947, 1948, and 1949 seasons, the Albemarle League was probable the strongest semi-pro league in the United States. The six teams in



1947 were Suffolk, Elizabeth City, Edenton, Hertford, Windsor, and Colerain. Suffolk was replaced by Plymouth in 1948.

Each team was allowed five non-resident players. Many of the teams stocked their rosters with college players from the "Big Four" Colleges. The five non-resident players on the Colerain 1947 Championship club were Frank Sangalli of Petersburg, Virginia, Vinnie Dilozenzo from U.N.C., Russ Batchelor from Wake Forest, and Ernie Johnson and Bill Flower from N.C. State.

The 1947 team defeated Suffolk in the semi-final playoff, and in a heart stopping seventh game defeated Edenton to become the Champions of the Albemarle League. Members of the 1947 team were Lefty McGee, Pos Askew, Mofield Evans, Bill Fowler, Preacher Mustain, J.C. Evans, Shirley Fairless, Vinnie Delorenzo, Fred Castellow, and "Monk" Harrington. "Hot Shot" Hughes was the bat boy.

Some of the players that joined the club in 1948 and 1949 were Charlie Teague, George Pratt, Al Cesky, Dale Blackwell, Kay Rogers, Tommy Umphlett, Herman Dowdy, Bob Cohen, Alex Cosmidos, Bill Brooks, Ed Gyson, and Ray Blair.

Colerain was proud of its team and the support from the local community and the surrounding towns was a great inspiration to the players. Crowds of 1000 people were not unusual for the home games.

Three of the five non-resident players married local girls and are still in the area. Russ Batchelor and Ernie Johnson married Ahoskie girls and Bill Fowler married a Colerain girl. Batchelor lives in Williamston, Johnson in Ahoskie, and Fowler in Colerain. Eleven members of the original team still live in the Colerain area.

Yes, baseball has been an important part of the Colerain scene. It provided many thrilling moments for the fans and the players. Baseball was good for Colerain, and Colerain was good for baseball.



Colerain Trappers are Lefty McGee, Pos Askew, Mofield Evans, Bill Fowler, and Preacher Mustain. Standing, left, are J. C. Evans, Shirley Fairless, Vinnie Dilozenzo, Fred Castellow, Frank Sangalli, Ed Daniels, Ernie Johnson, Russ Batchelor and Rudy Castelloe.



# FIRST TOWN COMMISSIONERS

A record in the Register of Deeds office in Windsor says commissioners in the first town of Colerain were appointed by the General Assembly when the town incorporated in 1794 as follows: James Campbell, Willie Sawyer, James Wilson and Thomas Cochran.

## POSTMASTERS

Colerain had the first Post Office in Bertie County. Below are the Postmasters who have served:

Josiah Holley	-----	1818
Wm. M. Cherry & A. Holley	----- May 27----	1837
Wm. D.E. Etheridge & Augusta Holley	----- Nov. 1----	1842
Joseph H. Etheridge	----- Sept. 7----	1847
Henry White	----- Nov. 11---	1854
Henry S. Ward	----- Jan. 19----	1856
Thomas Brown	----- April 8----	1857
John W. Sessoms	----- July 2-----	1860
Wm. P. Shaw	----- Jan. 20----	1866
Mrs. Betty A. Henry	----- March 8---	1866
Winborne S. Willoughby	----- Jan. 5-----	1875
Preston H. Sessoms	----- Oct. 18---	1875
Wm. B. Watford	----- Dec. 23----	1878
W. Harrison Harrell	----- Oct. 5-----	1889
Julius C. Leary	----- May 12----	1892
Daniel W. White	----- April 9----	1897
George W. Askew	----- Dec. 28---	1898
Mrs. Dora L. Saunders	----- April 30---	1898
Wm. H. Harrell	----- June 1-----	1907
George B. Miller	----- July 26----	1909
Addison J.M. Perry	----- April 15---	1914
William E. White	----- Feb. 6-----	1923
Mrs. Ruth F. White	----- May 1-----	1927
William E. White (Acting)	-----	1957
John E. Thompson	-----	1958

## DOCTORS

For many years Colerain had a continuation of good Doctors. Dr. Watford spent a life time here. He was followed by Dr. L.A. Nowell. Dr. Z.P. Mitchell located here in the last years of Dr. Nowell's time. Then came Dr. C.S. Credle, Dr. J.L. Darden, Dr. Patterson, Dr. Morton, Dr. McElroy and for a short time Drs. Mann and Atkins of Windsor had office hours here. For the past few years we have had no resident doctor.

In 1937, C.E. Wade opened a modern drug store. Four years ago he closed it because all hope of securing a doctor for Colerain was given up. He owns and operates a drug store in Ahoskie.

The Colerain Rescue Squad renders a great service here to the people of all the Colerain area.



## MAYORS

The following have served as Mayors of Colerain:

W.G. Adams  
C.W. Beasley  
H.O. White

D.P. Hughes  
J.L. Parker, Jr.  
W.H. Holloman

## BANK OF COLERAIN

The Bank of Colerain opened in 1908 with Dr. L.A. Nowell as President. He was followed by D.R. Britton, and J.L. Parker, Sr. Joseph B. Cherry, Sr. of Windsor was the first cashier of the Bank of Colerain. This bank merged with the Planters National Bank and Trust Company of Rocky Mount, North Carolina a few years ago.

## IMPROVEMENTS OF THE LAST FIFTY YEARS

Many of us are aware of what has been accomplished in Colerain during the last fifty years. However, it is still History to our younger people.

No one could ever forget the depression of the early thirties. The banks closed, there was no market either for the farmer or work in any kind of industrial work. Bread lines were in all the cities. The great Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President of the United States and under his leadership the Public Works Administration was born. Even this little town was allowed to participate. Under the leadership of Clarence W. Beasley as Mayor and Linnie D. Perry, Sr. as County Commissioner the following projects were approved and completed with W.P.A. labor: water, sewerage and sidewalks for the town; the school gymnasium; the Community House where the town library is located. A community cemetery lot was purchased and landscaped ready for our beloved dead in 1937. For these projects the Federal Government paid the greater part of the cost and the town issued bonds to pay its part. Colerain's Woman's Club and the Ruritan Club backed the Mayor and paid the town's part for the Community House. The Woman's Club put on a Baby Contest and cleared \$1800.00 to buy a heating plant for the Community Building. Little Mary Alice White was the winner.

A new Postoffice was dedicated in Colerain in November, 1961. This is a modern, well-equipped facility. John E. Thompson serves as Postmaster.

The new-Town Hall and the Fire Department were built in 1964. Part of Main Street was widened and curbing and guttering installed in 1966. Both of these projects were completed under the leadership of Mayor, J.L. Parker, Jr.

Through the years new homes and business places have been erected. Our churches have been enlarged and beautified with days of rejoicing when debts were paid and notes burned. I recall when Colerain Baptist Church dedicated their new parsonage in February, 1951. C.R. Brinkley, Chairman of the Deacons and W.E. White, Church Clerk, gave reports and burned the last cancelled note on the church.

At the Candlelight Litany, Miss Dot Belch, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arlie T. Belch, lighted the candle, because her father who passed away in 1945, was the real Candlelighter.

While Mr. Belch was confined to his home with an incurable disease he called nine prosperous Baptist layman in Colerain and discussed with them the need for



a Church Parsonage. He asked them to join him in giving \$1000.00 each to launch the movement to erect one. Eight of them agreed to do so and the ninth one later gave a large donation for the purchase of the present organ.

The church accepted the challenge. E.T. Forehand, Sr. gave the lot and H.O. White was chairman of the fund drive. The beautiful church parsonage stands as a monument to the Candlelighter, those who joined him, and the entire church membership.



